

REMARKS

The examiner has objected to the claims, specification and drawings under 35U.S.C.112 but it is believed that the changes currently being made by this amendment to the specification, claims and drawings will place the application in condition for no further objections under 35 U.S.C.112. With the two sheets of replacement drawings, the numeral 65 has been replaced with the original numeral 64 and the thru-hole in Fig.15A has been numbered as thru-hole 111. It should be appreciated that a complete substitute specification was filed in this application on May 21, 2004, even though the original application was filed on October 21, 2003. This may have some significance because the enclosed replacement page 14 corresponds exactly to page 14 of the substitute specification but everything is off one line from that which was filed originally October 21,2003. In this regard, it is believed that a new page 14 was required instead of page 4.

It is therefore respectfully requested that the rejection of Claims 1,3-8, and 10-14 be withdrawn based upon any combination of the '894 patent, the '414 patent, and the '134 patent. Each of these claims is believed to be in prima facie condition for allowance.

It is respectfully submitted that this additional response should not have been required. The last paper, dated February 2, 2007, and signed by Ms. Brenda L. Gray, merely recites that "Amendments to the specification" with the Box A checked, indicating that "A. Amended paragraphs(s) do not include markings." This is not true. We have enclosed true copies of the changes made to pages 9, 12, 14 and 22 of the specification submitted on January 12, 2007. Please note that pages 9, 12 and 22 have the required markings.

Page 14 requires no markings, because it is a replacement sheet for page 14 as originally filed. It has no changes. It would appear that when the original was being scanned in by the USPTO, page 14 was partially destroyed in the scanning process. This was addressed by Examiner Chin in an Office Action dated August 16, 2006 but the page 14 was inadvertently identified by the USPTO as page 4.

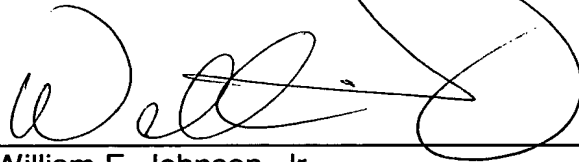
Because the response filed on January 12, 2007 was mistakenly not accepted by the USPTO, we should not be required to pay the two (2) month extension fee of \$450.00. This would not appear to be appropriate.

It is believed that there is no additional fee which or due in payable for filing this

amendment, but should such a fee be due or payable, the Commissioner of Patents is authorized to deduct such payment from the Deposit Account Number 13-2166.

The undersigned attorney for the applicants would appreciate a telephone conference with the examiner should the examiner be of the opinion that such a conference would be helpful in furthering the prosecution of this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. E. Johnson, Jr.', written over a horizontal line.

3/12/07

Date

William E. Johnson, Jr.
Reg. No.: 22,719
THE MATTHEWS FIRM (Customer No. 021897)
2000 Bering Drive, Suite 700
Houston, Texas 77057
713-355-4200 Telephone
713-355-9689 Facsimile



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[[Paragraph]] Fig. 5 shows a prior art nubbin 50 having a collar 52 and a threaded portion 54 having male threads which can be threaded into, for example, the box end 12 of the tubular joint 10 illustrated in FIG. 1.

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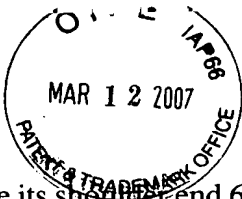


REPLACEMENT PAGE

5 Referring now to FIG.'s 13A and 13B, an isometric view of the latch assembly 100 is illustrated which shows the band 80 illustrated in FIG.'s 9, 10 and 11 that shows, in addition, the latch assembly 100 which is used to narrow the gap 84 illustrated in FIG. 11. A padeye 102 is attached to the other end of the band 80. A draw bolt 106 passes through the padeye 102 and has a spring [[108]] 109 which is held on to the draw bolt 106 by a nut 110 which can be adjusted
10 as needed, to vary the tension in the band and control the grip action of the band 80. A handle 112 is attached to a padeye 104.

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have its shoulder end 64 placed over the casing joint first and when properly positioned, usually a foot or so below the box end of the tubular joint 10, then the handle 112 for the latch mechanism 100 will be rotated away from the end having the nut 110 thereon. The latch is illustrated in the closed position in FIG. 13B. Closing the handle that way causes the two ends
5 of the band 80 to be brought closer together where the internal diameter of the band is resting up against the exterior of the tubular joint 10. As seen in FIG.'s 8 and 9-11, as the inclined surface 82, shown in FIG. 10, tries to run down the inclined surface 81 of FIG. 8, the band 80 moves tighter and tighter against the external surface of the tubular joint 10. The additional weight of the casing joint only tends to make the connection tighter and tighter against the external surface
10 of the tubular joint 10.

When using the apparatus shown in FIG. 6 with the band 80 therein, and when the device is to be used as a thread protector, it will be turned upside-down and run past the pin end 14 to a point at which the band 80 will contact the exterior surface of the tubular joint 10, but the body
15 90 of the thread protector shown in FIG. 12 will not contact the threads of the pin end 14. Any movement of the casing joint 10 with respect to the thread protector, only makes the band 80 go tighter against the exterior surface of the tubular joint 10, which prevents the thread protector from falling off of the tubular joint 10 and will thus protect the threads of the pin end 14 until such time as the handle 112 is rotated back the other direction to allow the band 80 to fit more
20 loosely around the tubular joint 10, and thus allow the thread protector to be easily removed from the tubular joint 10.

Referring now to FIG. 20, a prior art joint of oilfield tubular 10 such as is illustrated in greater detail in FIG. 1, and having an upper box end 12 and a lower pin end 14, is illustrated as having a load lifting ring 60 in accordance with the present invention attached near the upper box